I had no answer.

By the beginning of May, the Communists had been thrown out of a large part of the Ukraine, the Don, Kuban, and North Caucasus, but political conditions in the area remained chaotic. Each local government acted for itself. Their armed forces were poorly organized, little more than gangs of guerrilla fighters. The Volunteer Army had not increased much. It continued to be hated by the local population, as deeply hated as the Reds. Even the local anti-Communist governments did not trust it. They gave it lukewarm support as a military ally in the fight against the Communists but firmly refused its command the right to speak in the name of the Russian people.

Internal conflicts and tensions in Georgia, however, seemed mild in comparison with the tragic developments in Russia.

ABBAS TUMANI

Tiflis was wonderful in spring but lay prostrate in suffocating heat in summer. Jordania advised Emma and me to go with him for a week or two to Abbas Tumani, a tiny resort in the highlands, in the western corner of Georgia. A tuberculous Grand Duke had established his residence there, and for a decade or more only his personal guests were admitted to the place. After the revolution, the Transcaucasian government decided to convert the abandoned ducal mansion into a rest-house. The place, however, was too close to the settlement of the Adzhars, a warlike Moslem tribe that did not recognize the Georgian Republic, and our Georgian friends warned Jordania and us to keep away from this hornets' nest. But Jordania thought differently.

"The Adzhars never strike without reason," he said. "If we should arrive with guards and baggage, they would have reason to attack us. But if we have neither weapons nor valuables, why would they?" This sounded plausible, and we decided to go.

The road from the railroad station ran in long zigzags along a heavily forested slope. Not a single house for more than a hundred miles. Tall pines and firs replaced the magnolias of the lowlands, but the forest remained so thick that one could not see either the valley on one side of the road or the peaks on the other. Here and there the forest wall was cut by narrow clearings that looked like gates into another world, but trees blocked the far view.

Abbas Tumani, perched on a level green alp, had a fascinating view over a borderless ocean of virgin forest. The air was fragrant and fresh. The old caretaker showed us the estate. It had two substantial two-story frame buildings, each encircled by balconies. One had been designed for the Grand Duke and his guests; the other, for the staff, serv-